



# USALUMNEWS

April 2013



## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT INNOVATION FUND

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
INTERNATIONAL  
EXCHANGE  
ALUMNI  
alumni.state.gov



## 2013 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Competition Launches Worldwide

The third annual Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) competition launches on April 24! This year's competition invites teams of exchange alumni to propose projects to address global issues including Empowering Women, Outreach to Underserved Communities, Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment, Expanded Access to Education, Environmental Protection, Government Transparency, Freedom of Expression, Conflict Resolution, Citizen Security, and Promoting Civil Society. Winning teams will be awarded grants of up to \$25,000 in support of their projects.

Visit the 2013 AEIF pages on International Exchange Alumni (IEA) now to learn all about the competition! All alumni who wish to compete in the 2013 AEIF must be verified members of the IEA website ([www.alumni.state.gov](http://www.alumni.state.gov)). If you're not already a member, register for IEA today so that you can start working on your project. The deadline for submissions is May 12, 2013.

This is the only grant competition run by the State Department that is exclusively open to alumni of U.S. government programs. Last year, an alumni group led by Dr. Vicente Handa from Iloilo was awarded a grant of \$22,686 for their project, S.E.R.V.E.: A Service Learning Project. The Embassy also gave a grant of \$10,000 to Atty. Sheila Besario for her project, Safer Zone for Women and Girls in Negros Oriental. Check out these blogs to learn more about last year's winning projects...and to give you ideas for your own projects!

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Links to blogs created for the 2012 AEIF winner from the Philippines, "S.E.R.V.E. – A Service Learning Project"

- [https://www.facebook.com/ServeAServiceLearningProejct?ref=tn\\_tnm](https://www.facebook.com/ServeAServiceLearningProejct?ref=tn_tnm)
- <http://projectserve-bsedenglish.webs.com/>
- <http://beedwvsu2014.wordpress.com/>
- <http://coeprojectserve.wordpress.com/>

## Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter, USAlumnnews. Our goal is to fill this newsletter with articles, information, and links that are interesting to alumni of U.S. government exchange programs. This newsletter is not about the Embassy - it is about YOU. We want this to be a space where you share your perspectives with each other, where articles are written by alumni, for alumni.

Please share stories about your experiences in the U.S. and the Philippines. If your exchange took place in the 1950s, please share your experience. If your exchange took place in 2013, please share your experience. Diverse perspectives make our alumni community great!

We also plan to use this space to welcome new alumni, announce contests and grant opportunities, and highlight upcoming events organized by alumni and the Embassy. We welcome your feedback, so let us know how we are doing.



**Will Cocks**

Assistant Cultural  
Affairs Officer

## State Alumni Community - Philippines Facebook page

Philippine International Exchange Alumni have their own Facebook page: State Alumni Community-Philippines! This page and [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov) serve as social media platforms for alumni to share news, updates, insights, and opportunities with the Philippine alumni community. If you haven't yet "liked" our page; please do so and connect, inspire, and empower!



[facebook.com/StateAlumniPhilippines](https://facebook.com/StateAlumniPhilippines)

## CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING: THE KEY TO HARMONIOUS CO-EXISTENCE

I was very fortunate indeed to have participated in the 2008 Study of the United States Institute (SUSI) for Foreign Secondary Educators. The program was basically designed for intensive schooling focused on the course overview, "American Democracy: Continuing Debates over Rights and Obligations." It was meant to expose grantees to some of the most important issues in the U.S., such as Individual Rights vs. the Needs of the Many, Religious Pluralism and Tolerance vs. National Identity. I thought this was an opportunity to widen my horizon on American cultural diversity vis-a-vis the plurality of religions, since I truly believe that cultural understanding is a key to harmonious co-existence.



by: Fatima Abubakar

It was hosted by Amherst College Institute for Training and Development (ITD), in Amherst, Massachusetts, and there were 29 participants from 27 countries. Of the six week-long program, two weeks were intensively used for a study-tour. We visited Museums and Monuments in Washington D.C., the Statue of Liberty and UN Headquarters, the Harlem Spiritual Center, the Lowell Textile Museum and Plymouth Plantation, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Park, and many other places.

In New York City, while the group was preparing for Broadway, my room-mate, Dorothee, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I went out shopping at Macy's and explored the busy avenues near Times Square. On our way back to our hotel room we saw halal food vendors in carts everywhere. They were Egyptians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

In most of our tour my hotel roommate was Jeong Seok of South Korea. We shared the same view in terms of eating quietly while in the Valentine Dining Hall in Amherst College Campus, while our European counterparts were very noisy, laughing out so loudly even when eating. We also shared this same view with Hisato Suetake of Japan, Rajendran of India, Herman of El Salvador, Pavlina of Bulgaria and Dorothee.

At the Harlem Spiritual Center we saw how believers prayed to the tune of seemingly rock and roll gospel music. Athanasios of Greece shared the same view with us as to the solemnity of prayer. After the mass I was amazed to hear Islamic greetings from a young black man who went out of the church. As we went to take our lunch in Sylvia's Restaurant not so far from the church, there was a bearded elderly black man who greeted me with the same Islamic greetings. I never expected to hear those words in a place such as the Spiritual Center of Harlem. This incident brought me a sense of pride knowing that I am being recognized as a Muslim woman.

I was extremely fascinated by the rich cultural heritage of the indigenous people of America during our visit to the historic Deerfield Museum in Massachusetts and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana. We met the Cheyenne natives with their spiritual leaders, who warmly welcomed us. They entertained us with their own native songs and dances at the Chief Dull Knife College. They brought us to their sacred area with huge stones and marks and there were rituals made before and after going to sacred places. I felt I belonged there because, honestly, my physical appearance (without the head cover) was similar to them, and this was noticed by my classmates.

These experiences all had a tremendous impact on me as an educator and as a values educator, specifically. They truly changed my perception about America and Americans.

## Competition: Two Scholarships for Youth Leadership Conference

The Embassy will sponsor two alumni, aged 17-30, to participate in the 4th University Scholars Leadership Symposium on August 1 – 7, 2013 in Manila. The conference is sponsored by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. According to the conference's organizer, the UK-based NGO Humanitarian Affairs:

"This annual event will see a culmination of some 1,000 young individuals from leading Universities and NGOs around the world to talk about issues pertaining to humanitarian matters. The program will provide leadership development and motivation training to further cultivate the youth to reach their full potential. And it will also provide the youths with opportunities to engage in humanitarian service, strengthen their understanding of diverse cultures, network with young leaders from all over the world who share the same passion and empower them to become outstanding global citizens dedicated to service leadership."

Each of the two Embassy scholarships will cover domestic transportation to and from the conference and a Full Symposium Registration Fee. For more details about the conference and the items covered by the Full Symposium Registration Fee, please see the links below:

- <http://issuu.com/humanitarianaffairs/docs/manila.symposium>
- [http://www.universityscholars.org.uk/index.php?page=content&id=register\\_2013\\_fees](http://www.universityscholars.org.uk/index.php?page=content&id=register_2013_fees)



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**INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI**

Inspire. Empower. Connect

State Alumni is now International Exchange Alumni! It's faster, more modern and easier to access. We're still at the same web address: [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov).

International Exchange Alumni features exciting resources to help you network and collaborate with your peers. Now, you can:

- Create project pages and share your projects.
- Connect with alumni through other social media.
- Read stories on the new publicly-viewable pages.

You will continue to have exclusive access to your favorite resources:

- Post an alumni update.
- Share an event that you are organizing.
- Explore the grants database and the online library.
- Access job and volunteer opportunities.

## How to Apply

Submit a one (1) page resume and a one (1) page essay to Alumni Coordinator Richmond Jimenez at [JimenezRL@state.gov](mailto:JimenezRL@state.gov) by Wednesday, May 15. The essay should describe how your participation in the conference would benefit you and your community.

Embassy scholarship committee will choose the winners. The committee will stop reading essays and resumes after the one page cut-off, so be concise. To have a chance to win, all applicants must meet the participation requirements listed in the conference brochure and be deemed eligible by the Embassy and Humanitarian Affairs.

## Welcome to the Alumni Community!

### E-Teacher Scholarship Program (Completed course in March 2013)

Ms. Sonia Rosales-Low

Mrs. Maria Lourdes Ramirez

Mr. Marc Fabella

Mr. Rodolfo Talua

### Philippine Youth Leadership Program Batch 10 (Return on May 12, 2013)

Mr. Jun Mar Amban  
Ms. Sarah Jane Diang  
Mr. Marti Gregorio  
Ms. Charmine Puig  
Miss Sittie Ayra Abedin  
Mr. Dun Oliver Abiera  
Miss Karla Jean Acot  
Miss Sheena Mae Alcala  
Mr. Alexandre Jr. Ali  
Miss Faye Barandino  
Mr. Jeson Paul Cabug-os  
Miss Maphile Mae Canencia  
Miss May Fiel Divino  
Mr. Jevern Ellaga

Miss Noryn Jane Esguerra  
Miss Rizza Angelie Fernandez  
Miss Samantha Marie Frial  
Miss Mary Kristine Gerali  
Miss Duaine Janiola  
Mr. Abdulkarim Jul  
Miss Aisah Malong  
Miss Ayana Jamnia Maranda  
Miss Nafieza Mohammad  
Mr. Jalalodin Mustari  
Mr. Rikk Nicholson Nalzar  
Mr. Sanjeev Parmanand  
Mr. Deanjann Piloton  
Mr. Arthur Joshua Rodriguez  
Mr. Ellaga Jevern





## K-L YES Program turns 10; Alumni Throw Volunteer Party

The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (K-L YES) program marks its tenth anniversary this year. To celebrate, alumni of the program have eschewed the cake and candles and instead are volunteering to improve their communities using the tools they learned on their exchange programs. Their new volunteer program, 10 Pledges for YES 10, pledges one new community outreach initiative each month for the remainder of 2013, for a total of 10 events spread across the Philippines. You do not need to be a K-L YES alumnus to participate. If you are interested in joining forces with other alumni to make a difference in your community, please contact the 10 Pledges for YES 10 organizers by: email ([tenpledgesforYES10@yahoo.com](mailto:tenpledgesforYES10@yahoo.com)), Facebook ([10PledgesForYes10](https://www.facebook.com/10PledgesForYes10)), or Twitter ([@10pledges4YES10](https://twitter.com/10pledges4YES10)), or <http://10pledgesforyes10.weebly.com/>

The K-L YES Program is a State-Department funded exchange program that sends high school students to the U.S. for one year to live with a host family and study in an American high school ([www.yesprograms.org](http://www.yesprograms.org)).

## INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM (IWP)

After staying for nearly three months in the United States to take part in the International Writing Program (IWP) Fall Residency in the latter part of 2012, Genevieve Asenjo couldn't help but miss the vastness of the United States.

In her article from the website of the University of Iowa, which hosts the annual residency, IWP gifted her with empathy for U.S. and Americans, and the opportunity to see the many sides of America, "beyond Hollywood and foreign policy."

Although failing to catch her first real snow, Asenjo was still able to enjoy beautiful places in the U.S. like the Mississippi River and Lake MacBride that can inspire her in writing a future masterpiece.

Asenjo, a fiction writer, poet, and author of four books including *Lumbay ng Dila* (The Melancholy of the Tongue), is the winner of the Philippines' 2011 National Book Award. She is also an Associate Professor of literature

and creative writing at De La Salle University-Manila. She translates into the Philippine languages Kinaray-a, Hiligaynon, and Filipino, and founded Balay Sugidanun (Storytelling House).

During the Fall Residency, 25-35 writers gather in Iowa City for this 10-week residency to work on their own projects, to give readings and lectures, and to interact with American audiences and literary communities across the U.S. Writers share their literary cultures with others and establish contacts with the larger US publishing scene.

To read Asenjo's full article about her experience with the IWP, visit: <http://iwp.uiowa.edu/shse/>

To learn more about the Fall Residency, you can visit: <http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/international-writing-program-fall-residency>



Genevieve Asenjo

# DATES AND EVENTS

**April 24:** Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2013) Worldwide Launch

**April 27:** K-L YES Alumni hold "Big - 3" event in Cavite. "Big - 3" is a community service project combining three activities over two days.

**April 28:** Global Youth Service Day

**April 30:** International Jazz Day

**May 10:** 10 Pledges of YES 10 activity-Responsible Citizenship: Voter's Rights & Responsibilities (2013 Philippine election)

**May 12:** Deadline for submission of 2013 AEIF project ideas

**May 15:** Deadline for submission of Youth Leadership Conference Applications

**May 20:** International Visitors Program Welcome Reception. The International Visitor Program-Philippines (IVP-Phils) alumni organization is hosting a luncheon to welcome IVP alumni who participated in the program from 2008 to the present. *For more information, contact Ms. Aben at 0917-829-3361.*

**May 28:** AEIF 2013- Announcement of alumni projects selected to enter the AEIF finalist phase

**May 28 – June 16:** AEIF 2013- Finalist teams will refine proposals and International Exchange Alumni members may vote on their favorite projects.

**June:** 10 Pledges of YES 10 activity-Peace and Technology: Video Conference (Social Media Day)

**July:** AEIF 2013- Department of State voting panel announces winning AEIF projects

**July:** 10 Pledges of YES 10 activity for World Youth Day

**Add your  
Alumni Event  
here!**

**If you have an upcoming Alumni Event you want to announce, please contact:**

**Richmond Jimenez**  
email: [JimenezRL@state.gov](mailto:JimenezRL@state.gov)

## Be a Fan of the U.S. Embassy

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## Follow on Twitter



Ambassador Harry K. Thomas : [@AmbHarryThomas](https://twitter.com/AmbHarryThomas)

DCM Brian L. Goldbeck : [@USEmbManilaNo2](https://twitter.com/USEmbManilaNo2)

### Links to grants:

- <https://alumni.state.gov/member-resources/grant-opportunities>

### Links to job opportunities:

- [http://manila.usembassy.gov/employment\\_opps.html](http://manila.usembassy.gov/employment_opps.html)
- <https://alumni.state.gov/member-resources/job-opportunities>

**If you have interesting stories and experiences to share, please contact:**

**Richmond Jimenez**  
Alumni Coordinator,  
U.S. Embassy, Manila  
email: [JimenezRL@state.gov](mailto:JimenezRL@state.gov)